In its medicinal properties the root of the Phytolacca decandra approaches nearer to ipecacuanha than any American vegetable, I have hitherto examined. From abundant experience, the result of many trials made in Dispensary practice, I am satisfied that, when properly prepared, it operates in the same doses and with the same certainty, as the South American emetic. Ten grains of the powder will rarely remain on the stomach, and twenty or thirty produce a powerful operation, by emesis and generally by catharsis. In its mode of operation, this medicine has some peculiarities, a part of which are favorable, others disadvantageous. Its advantages are, that it operates with ease, and seldom occasions pain or cramp. Its disadvantages are, 1. That it is slow in its effects, frequently not beginning to operate until an hour, and sometimes two hours after it is taken. 2. That it continues to operate for a greater length of time than is usual for emetics, although as far as I have been able to observe, it is readily checked by an opiate. These disadvantages however are not constant. I have repeatedly known it commence operating in fifteen minutes, and cease after four or five ejections. The representations of patients as to any unpleasant feelings under its effects, are not greater than we should

naturally expect, when it is recollected, that no emetic is altogether comfortable in its operation. Dr. Fisher of Beverly* informs me that whenever he has used the Phytolacca, it has performed its duty as an emetic perfectly well, and that in one patient, a female of irritable stomach, in whom previous emetics had always excited severe spasms, ten grains of the Phytolacca operated effectually, and no spasm followed.

I have sometimes observed slight narcotic symptoms during the operation of Phytolacca, particularly vertigo. But others have not always met with this symptom. Dr. George Hayward of this town, who has had much experience with this medicine, the results of which were communicated to the Linnæan society, and afterwards published in the New England Journal, October 1817, states that in doses of a scruple, he never noticed any dizziness, or stupor from it, although he had always been particular in his inquiries to know if any such symptoms took place. The above dose was administered by him in nearly thirty cases, in all of which, except in one case, it operated as an emetic and cathartic, usually three or four times, thoroughly, though not severely, generally commencing its operation on the stom-

* Letter dated November, 1815.